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**State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development**
Jim Doyle, Governor
Roberta Gassman, Secretary

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State Receives Grant to Aid Child Support Collection

Madison – Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman today announced that Wisconsin received a 3-year federal grant totaling \$325,200 to help improve child support collections and assure that families receive the child support payments that they are due.

"Wisconsin maintains one of the best state programs for collecting child support in the country. We are pleased that this funding will help make our program even better at helping families." Secretary Gassman said. "Strategies to help parents pay their support will greatly increase the economic stability of those families. This grant will allow us reach that goal."

Using this grant, the Department of Workforce Development and the Milwaukee County Child Support Enforcement Office will provide legal assistance to low-income parents who may soon be ordered to pay support. Legal Action of Wisconsin, Inc. will provide the legal assistance for parents.

The project goal is to lessen court battles over child support payments, ensuring that children's financial needs are met. This is particularly important for low-income families who might not otherwise have access to legal assistance. Providing legal assistance and negotiating payment plans prior to court proceedings helps avoid legal disputes and provides more reliable child support payments.

For single parent families struggling to pay bills and raise a family, child support provides critical income that can prevent families from dropping further into poverty. Child support collected by the government is critical for millions of American families and children.

The project will assure that:

- Court orders more closely match a parent's ability to pay child support;
- Parents makes support payments on a more regular basis; and
- Parents are better able to interact with the child support system.

In all, ten states will receive \$1.1 million in federal grants to fund demonstration projects to increase the performance of the nation's child support enforcement programs. The funding comes from the Administration for Children & Families at US Dept. of Health & Human Services.

Wisconsin collected \$589 million last year to rank tenth nationally in support dollars collected, a full \$184 million more than the national average. Wisconsin made the top 10 in collections, even though it ranks 20th in population. The state collection effort is one of the most efficient and effective in the nation. For every \$1 spent, nearly \$6 is collected to meet the needs of children.

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